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Let the U.N. decide

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George A. Lopez

The Bush administration now faces one of its greatest foreign-policy challenges. How might the U.S. persuade the United Nations (news - web sites) Security Council to end the economic sanctions against Iraq (news - web sites)? The task involves tough choices of style and substance. Proclamations by Bush advisers such as Richard Perle that we have entered the "post-U.N. era," or assertions that the U.S. might render U.N. sanctions irrelevant by ending its own, reflect a wrongheaded approach.

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It is in the interests of the U.S. and the U.N. that the U.N. take the lead in a post-Saddam Hussein (news - web sites) Iraq. The U.N. has the best track record in post-conflict administrative management -- whether it be in Cambodia or Bosnia -- and can disabuse many of U.S. imperial intentions or overstaying our welcome.

Political paybacks aimed at making France and Russia "toe the line" via a bullying U.S. strategy are self-defeating. Rather, the U.S. needs a creative, collegial approach heavy on political acumen and short on bravado.

Such a strategy begins with recognizing that every nation and company anxious to do business with Iraq needs the legal end to sanctions. There are no other options. The majority of the council believes that sanctions cannot be legally ended until Iraq is certified as weapons-free.

These realities point to a practical interim approach made possible by a Security Council resolution in December that permits the suspension of sanctions for 120 days if Iraq is undergoing weapons inspections. That can lift the sanctions and preserve the legal continuity and integrity of the U.N.'s role in Iraq.

The French already have indicated that such a plan is acceptable. This solution also creates the political space needed on all sides to mend fences and assess the next steps. Among these is integrating the U.N. into the weapons-assessment process and engaging the U.N. to help Iraq establish itself as a legitimate member of the international community. As in the past, an intelligent and magnanimous call to action by the U.S. will prompt council consensus.

With such diplomacy, Iraq sanctions can soon move from suspension to termination. To opt instead for power struggles in a winner-take-all approach will cost the U.S. the peace -- and Iraqis the prosperity -- that lies within our grasp.

George A. Lopez is a professor of government and international studies at the University of Notre Dame and co-author of five books on U.N. sanctions.

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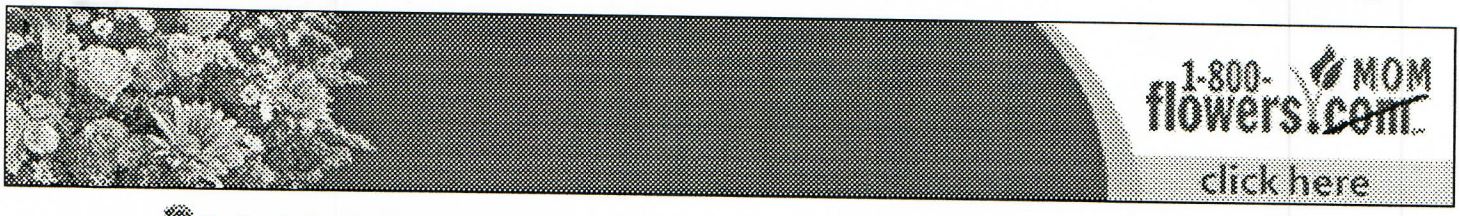

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PRESIDENT GORE: A LOOK BACK

Wed Apr 30,10:02 PM ET

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By Ted Rall

DAYTON, OHIO--Few political observers anticipated the widespread resentment that followed Al Gore (news - web sites)'s controversial assumption of the presidency in December 2000. "The U.S. Supreme Court (news - web sites) merely adhered to the Constitution when it refused to hear Bush's appeal of the Florida ruling," notes a Harvard law professor now living in exile in France. "Federal courts have no jurisdiction over election disputes, which in the United States are a state matter." Although the ensuing recount ultimately gave Florida to Gore by a comfortable thousand-vote margin, Republicans refused to accept the results. Talk radio host Rush Limbaugh continued to refer to Gore as "Vice President Gore" and "Resident-in-Chief" and listed the time remaining in Gore's first term as "days left in captivity for the American people."

Ted Rall

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Republican candidate George W. Bush, meanwhile, refused to concede defeat. "Make no mistake," the former Texas governor declared from self-proclaimed "internal exile" in Crawford, Texas, "that man will never be my president." The GOP filed a slew of lawsuits challenging the election results, and right-wing militia groups issued dark threats about overthrowing Gore's "illegal junta."

Despite Gore's attempts to govern from the center--he appointed several Republicans to his cabinet, including Secretary of Defense Colin Powell (news - web sites)--Congressional Republicans and their conservative Democratic allies stonewalled early Gore Administration attempts to deliver on key campaign promises. The Senate refused to ratify the Kyoto treaty on global warming (news - web sites). Bills to slash federal taxes for poor and middle-class workers, ban oil drilling in national wildlife refuges and crack down on corporate crime failed to make it out of Republican-controlled committees in the House. Senator Trent Lott let the President know that he could expect more of the same in the future: "It is my party's duty to represent the 48 percent of the voters who did not support Al Gore, and that's exactly what we're going to do," he said.

Gore's polls, already falling due to the lagging economy, hit rock bottom in the weeks after the September 11th attacks. "People rightly blamed the Commander-in-Chief for not doing anything to intercept planes that had clearly been hijacked and for ignoring warnings of an imminent threat," says a GOP pollster. "But concern about incompetence quickly segued into the 'wimp thing.' Disgust at Gore's cowardice became widespread when he abandoned Washington to the terrorists and flew off to hide in that silo under Nebraska. Diligent journalists then reminded Americans how he'd wussed out of Vietnam by joining the Tennessee Air National Guard and then going AWOL, and for many voters that was that."

In a bizarre and cynical ploy to exploit 9-11, the President attempted to turn things around by dispatching troops to one war after another--and made a mess of each one.

Choosing to ignore Pakistan's role as chief host and financier of Al Qaeda, Gore waged a strange too-little-too-late bombing campaign against the Taliban in Afghanistan (news - web sites). Terrorist mastermind Osama bin Laden (news - web sites) escaped. Night after night David Letterman (news - Y! TV) mocked Gore's pledge to capture the Saudi dissident: "Dead or alive? Shuck and jive is more like it." Gore's lack of military experience led him to go along with CIA (news - web sites) schemes to bribe Afghan warlords. "From the Afghan perspective, the warlords were even worse than the Taliban," says an expert on Central Asia. "They should have bombed both." In 2002 *The New York Times* revealed that oil companies with close political connections to the Democratic Party had schemed with Gore to run an oil pipeline across Afghanistan from Turkmenistan to Pakistan--and that this was why he had attacked Afghanistan and cozied up with the Pakistani dictatorship. Tens of thousands of veterans marched on Washington, screaming "no blood for oil" and Senator Orrin Hatch suggested that "a president who wages war to line the pockets of his golfing buddies merits impeachment."

Incredibly, the next move of the man dubbed "Gore out of control" by Fox News was to declare an unprovoked war on Iraq (news - web sites). "Saddam Hussein has weapons of mass destruction, he's an evil dictator and he's a threat to world peace," Gore railed to a joint session of Congress. When the United Nations (news - web sites) refused to support Gore's request for an international coalition, even Congressional Democrats decided that they had had enough of their bellicose leader, and joined their counterparts across the aisle. "There's no proof that Saddam Hussein (news - web sites) has WMDs," declared Senate Majority Leader Tom Daschle. "Until that changes, we have no grounds for a preemptive strike--an act that violates every precept of international law." Nonetheless, Gore relied on the War Powers Act to order in the

As we know, Saddam Hussein didn't use nuclear, biological or chemical weapons to defend his dying regime. American forces never found any. And news soon began leaking that Gore was awarding lucrative Iraqi rebuilding contracts to oil companies that had contributed to his 2000 campaign. A Gallup poll showed that 88 percent of Americans considered Gore a liar, and that 79 percent favored his removal from office and prosecution for the wanton murder of thousands of Iraqis. As Iraq degenerated into sectarian violence amid growing signs of a possible radical Islamic revolution, Gore brazenly categorized the mayhem he had wrought on an innocent people as liberation. "They don't know it yet," he proclaimed, "but they'll thank us for this someday."

When it comes to Teflon, recent events demonstrate that Ronald Reagan (news - web sites) had nothing on Al Gore. It turns out, for example, that among the more than 600 Afghans illegally held at a U.S. base in Guantánamo Bay, Cuba are three children, aged 13 to 15. Meanwhile, Democrats have just announced plans to hold the latest national convention in their party's history, in early September in New York, so that President Gore can capitalize on the memorials for the third anniversary of the 9-11 attacks. The 2004 confab will end on September 10th, allowing Gore to shuttle back and forth between Ground Zero and Madison Square Garden. True, Gore's behavior has given him single-digit popularity ratings--but he's still president.

What will it take for the American people to turn this madman out on his ear once and for all? It's impossible to say. As things stand now, he could put babies on the White House menu and claim he was fighting overpopulation.

(Ted Rall is the author of "Gas War: The Truth Behind the American Occupation of Afghanistan," an analysis of the underreported Trans-Afghanistan Pipeline project and the real motivations behind the war on terrorism. Ordering information is available at amazon.com and barnesandnoble.com.)

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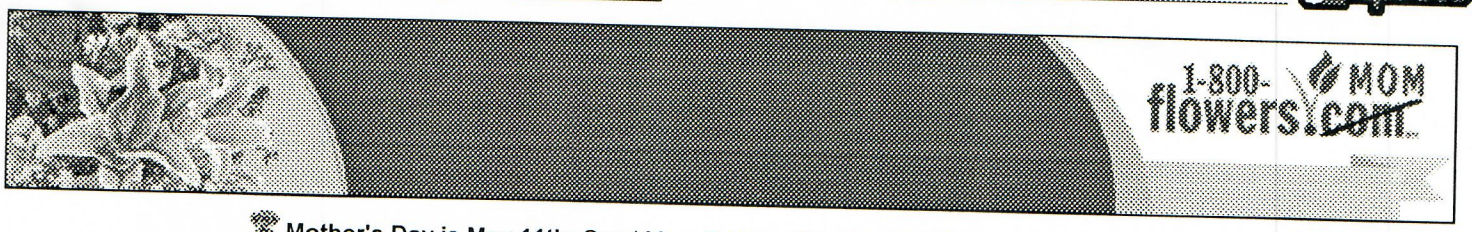

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LIBERALS MEET UNEXPECTED RESISTANCE

Thu May 1,10:02 PM ET

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By Ann Coulter

Though many had anticipated a cakewalk for the media in undermining the war on terrorism, instead liberals are caught in a quagmire of good news about the war. Predictions that liberals would have an easy time embarrassing President Bush (news - web sites) have met unexpected resistance. They're still looking for the bad news they said was there. Experts believe the media's quagmire results from severely reduced troops. The left's current force is less than half the size of the coalition media that undermined the Vietnam War.

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Special Coverage

Ann Coulter

It's been a tough few weeks all around for the anti-war crowd. On Sunday, the London Telegraph reported that documents had been discovered in Baghdad linking Saddam Hussein (news - web sites) to Osama bin Laden (news - web sites). Hussein and bin Laden had a working relationship as far back as 1998, based on their mutual hatred of America and Saudi Arabia. As we go to print, it's Day Four of The New York Times' refusal to mention these documents.

Government documents have also been found in Iraq (news - web sites) showing that a leading anti-war spokesman in Britain, Member of Parliament George Galloway, was in Saddam Hussein's pay. Scott Ritter, former U.N. arms inspector turned peacenik turned suspected pederast, immediately defended Galloway in a column in the London Guardian. With any luck, Tariq Aziz will now step in to defend Ritter.

At least Tariq Aziz knows he lost the war. American liberals are still hoping for a comeback. But the war was so successful, they don't have any arguments left. They can't even sound busy. In their usual parody of patriotism, liberals are masters of the long-winded statement that amounts to nothing. They can't go on TV and say *nothing*. But all they have are some broken figurines to complain about.

They said chemical weapons would be used against our troops. That didn't happen. They predicted huge civilian casualties. That didn't happen. They said Americans would turn against the war as our troops came home in body bags. That didn't happen. They warned of a mammoth terrorist attack in America if we invaded Iraq. That didn't happen. Just two weeks ago, they claimed American troops were caught in another Vietnam quagmire. That didn't happen.

Now the biggest mishap liberals can seize on is that some figurines from an Iraqi museum were broken -- a relief to college students everywhere who have ever been forced to gaze upon Mesopotamian pottery. We're not talking about Rodins here. So the Iraqis looted. Oh well. Wars are messy. Liberalism is part of a religious disorder that demands a belief that life is controllable.

At least we finally got liberals on the record *against* looting. It seems the looting in Iraq compared unfavorably with the "rebellion" in Los Angeles after the Rodney King verdict. When "rebels" in Los Angeles began looting, liberals said it was a sign of frustration -- they were poor and hungry. As someone noted at the time, apparently they were thirsty as well, since they hit a lot of liquor stores. Meanwhile, the Iraqis were pretty careful about targeting the precise source of their oppression. Their looting concentrated on Saddam's palace, official government buildings -- and the French cultural center.

However many precious pots were stolen, it has to be said: The Iraqi people behaved considerably better than the French did after Americans liberated Paris. Thousands of Frenchmen were killed by other Frenchmen on allegations of collaboration with the Nazis. Subsequent scholarship has shown that charges of "collaboration" were often nothing more than a settling of personal grudges and family feuds. This was made simple by the fact that so many Frenchmen really did collaborate with the Nazis. The French didn't seem to resent the Nazi occupation very much. Nazi occupation is their default position. They began squirming only after Americans came in and imposed democracy on them.

Despondent over the success of the war in Iraq, liberals tried to cheer themselves up with the politics of personal destruction -- their second favorite hobby after defending Saddam Hussein. Responding to the question of whether the Supreme Court should hold sodomy to be a fundamental constitutional right, Republican Sen. Rick Santorum made the blindingly obvious point that a general right to engage in consensual

For the limited purpose of attacking Santorum, liberals agreed to stipulate that adultery is bad. After spending all of 1998 ferociously defending adultery as something "everyone" does and "everyone" lies about, liberals claimed to be shocked to the core that anyone would compare homosexuality to such a morally black sin as adultery. (While we're in a sensitive mood, how about the name "the DIXIE Chicks (news - web sites)"? Isn't that name provocative to African-Americans?)

When you get liberals to come out against both looting and adultery in the same week, you know the left is in a state of total disarray. They shouldn't feel so bad. Their boys put up a good fight in Iraq for 17 days.

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